Outcome 4: **Improve student ability to take actions that benefit Chesapeake and coastal ecosystems through outdoor learning experiences** (environmental education outdoor Learning experiences for Maryland students pre-Kindergarten through grade 12).

Background: This opportunity, funded through the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant, is offered primarily to support costs associated with providing outdoor learning field investigations away from school campuses for students in pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, as part of comprehensive Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) that contribute to school environmental literacy programs. Funding will be made available to support local school districts partnering with environmental education providers including non-formal educators, or other partners working with pre-K-12 schools/teachers/students. Experiences should include an emphasis on watershed and related science-based investigations integrated within required school curricula across grade levels (systemically).

Intended Outcomes:
- Increased outdoor learning about the environment at sites such as public lands, where students can experience nature/natural resources;
- Support for schools, particularly those with demonstrated economic need or funding gaps, to provide improved environmental literacy programs that include outdoor learning experiences;
- Help build environmental stewards among Maryland students by nurturing a passion for the outdoors, and increasing understanding of what will improve quality of local waterways and Chesapeake Bay.

Allowable Expenses:
- Transportation costs to outdoor sites, especially public lands such as state parks, federal parks or refuges, local public green spaces. Other types of sites will be considered. Expenses may include buses, boats, public transit, etc.
- Site fees, program fees, cost per student
- Site needs (portable toilets, etc., if not available through another source and that would, if not funded, prevent the field experience from taking place)
- Field equipment/supplies to support the outdoor experience(s). These are items that will be added to curriculum supplies and are not funded by the schools' funds/budgets. Stewardship project supplies (trees, shovels, etc. for planting) may be requested if this is part of the field experience.
- Staff assistance (for example from environmental education partner organization), for program support directly related to components of the proposed activities.
- Substitute teachers as needed to allow teachers to lead student field experiences.
- Professional development costs if directly associated with the proposed experiences and necessary for teachers to be able to lead these experiences as part of the curriculum.

Budget & Timeline:
- $100,000 total is available (2019 Opportunity)
- Minimum proposal $25,000 (if your request is slightly smaller, contact DNR to discuss)
- Maximum request is $100,000
- Timeline is not limited to one year, and funds may be used during parts of two school years if necessary.
- DNR expects to fund 4-6 projects under this opportunity.

Eligible Applicants - the following, serving as a resource or partner for schools:
- Local school systems or districts
- Institutions of higher education
- State or local agencies
- Parks authorities in local or state agencies

- Individual schools may apply but should keep in mind the minimum funding amount and timeline for spending, as well as the selection criteria.
- Non-profit organizations (environmental, environmental education, youth-oriented, etc.) are <u>not</u> eligible to apply, but are encouraged to partner with applicants, and costs may be included in the budget.

<u>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</u>:

Applicants are encouraged to use the following guidance as they prepare answers to the questions in the online application. The criteria described will earn applications higher ranking. These are not required but preferences. Applicants should clearly articulate within the narrative responses to the application questions information pertaining to any of these points that apply to their program. Any additional pieces to support this information may be included in the uploads (see suggestions below).

You may want to prepare your responses in a separate document and paste them into the text boxes in the online application. Length limits provided for some questions are based on using a font such as 11 or 12 point Times, on standard 8.5 x 11" paper with ¾-inch margins.

<u>Selection Criteria</u> include the following and additional guidance regarding the criteria is embedded within the application questions, below:

- Funds will be used to close budget gaps to achieve comprehensive programs, or to support students in communities of need, such as Title I schools or underserved geographics/ demographics.

- Demonstrated support for and contribution to environmental literacy priorities, with programs having been implemented, pursued or under development.

- The program aims to use funds cost-effectively to reach all students (or as many as feasible) within a given grade throughout a school system.

- The program includes professional development for teachers as needed, with environmental education partners on board to provide it.

- Ability to undertake and sustain the proposed work.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS GUIDANCE:
*As a guide, you should limit your narrative for all questions to a **total of 8 pages**; uploads are separate.*

Section 1: COMMON APPLICATION:

Proposal Abstract --
Describe your project including the overall goals and methods of the proposed project(s). ***Limit 5 sentences.***

Demographics --
Please describe the population(s) of students that will be served and engaged in this program, including demographic information about the students and their community. *The Department of Natural Resources is committed to expanding the diversity, equity and inclusion of Marylanders in its programs and services. To the extent possible, demographics as well as economic need will be considered as a priority factor in decisions under this opportunity, aiming to put the funding to its best use in this regard among applications received.*

- Criteria: Funds will be used to close budget gaps to achieve comprehensive programs, or to support students in communities of need, such as Title I schools or underserved geographics/ demographics.

    - For example, the program addresses priority areas/communities and critical sub-watersheds identified using tools such as the Chesapeake Bay Program's ChesapeakeProgress, the Maryland Environmental Justice Screening Tool, the Maryland Park Equity Mapper, or the Maryland

[StreamHealth map](#). These are suggested resources but not the only means to determine priority or need. Provide information to support how the audience or school system was selected.

Project Need or Problem --
Discuss the curriculum focus or other changes in the school system that this project will ultimately support or address, including the environmental literacy emphasis and/or incorporating outdoor learning into the curriculum. How will this project help schools implement the environmental literacy program in a way that they have not been able to before? Demonstrate need: Provide information to illustrate the economic need of students and/or budget gaps for the school(s) or school system. Include information about percentage of students on Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) Program, percentage of schools designated as Title I, etc. *Limit to 2 pages or less.*

- Criteria: The program aims to use funds cost-effectively to reach all students (or as many as feasible) within a given grade throughout a school system.
    - Recipients will be required to have a method in place for selecting the students (schools) to be served, for example, a brief application internal to the school district with criteria that describe how individual schools will be selected for participation. The plan for this process should be described in the application.
    - The proposed program is cost-effective, utilizing funds within reasonable costs to reach as many students [and teachers] as feasible to achieve stated goals.

Project Goals and Outcome(s) --
Describe succinctly the goals and objectives of the proposed program/project.

Applicant's Experience / Role --
Describe your ability to undertake and sustain the proposed work. Briefly explain your experience with this type of activity and your role in the project. If there are partners on board, explain their role in the project.

- Criteria: Ability to undertake and sustain the proposed work.

PROJECT TIMELINE
Key Milestones -- Provide a concise timeline describing the implementation/activity major tasks, milestones, and deliverables, with their associated start and end dates.

ATTACHMENTS
- Transmittal Letter -- **REQUIRED** -- from your agency or organization on letterhead, with signature of executive authorized to request funding on applicant's behalf
- Other Attachments (i.e. Letters of support, etc.) -- optional
- School System(s) Superintendent Support Letter(s) -- **REQUIRED**
- Environmental Literacy Plan -- **REQUIRED** (or the below)
- Other supporting documentation for curriculum connections -- **REQUIRED if Environmental Literacy Plan is not provided -- upload under "Other Attachments"**

Section 2: PROJECT DETAILS LISTING:

When you see "Add New Item…" use your project name as below. You do not need the 8-digit watershed or to identify the legislative district for this application for Outcome 4.

Site or Task Name -- For this application (under Outcome 4), use the title of your application that you entered at the beginning of the application.

Proposed Activities --
Provide a description of the proposed activities, clearly explaining how it will address the specific criteria referenced in the solicitation for this funding opportunity. Include a description of the engagement of school districts, schools, teachers and students – for example: How will school system staff participate in shaping the program and integrating it into the curriculum? How will teachers be trained? What will students learn and do throughout the project? How many school districts, schools, students and teachers will be served, engaged, trained? How many field experiences are anticipated? Include a summarizing list of main **deliverables** throughout the project, including numbers to quantify project outputs and outcomes. If specifying stewardship projects, include anticipated square feet of rain garden, number of trees planted and area of stream buffer, etc., even though projects will be planned by students, to give an idea of the potential magnitude of projects. ***This question is limited to one page.***

Which school systems will be served? --
Check all school systems with which you will be working in this project. You must designate at least one. For applicants that are not school systems, those working with multiple school systems will be given more favorable rating.

Environmental Literacy Plan --
Do(es) the school system(s) supported have a written environmental literacy plan in place or being developed? If so, please upload it (in the section above), and describe briefly here how this proposal supports it (which grade level(s), content areas, topics of study, etc.). If there is not a written plan, describe what is being done to contribute to developing a plan for the system or otherwise incorporating environmental literacy into the curriculum. An alternate document to illustrate this may be uploaded under "Other Attachments" if no formal environmental literacy plan exists. Some suggestions are below. If there are questions, contact the DNR Outcome Contact listed.

- Criteria: Demonstrated support for and contribution to environmental literacy priorities, with programs having been implemented, pursued or under development. The proposed program supports school system environmental literacy priorities, including any of the following:

    - The program is part of the school district Environmental Literacy plan -- applicant should include a copy of the plan.

    - Describe/demonstrate that the schools/school system(s) have worked to plan and implement comprehensive environmental literacy programs/MWEEs as part of their curriculum, and everything else is in place except the funding for transportation and other costs associated with the off-site field experiences.

    - The schools/school system(s) are early in the process of building their environmental literacy programs/goals and garnering funds for transportation and other costs for outdoor learning will boost progress in this effort (explain how the funding will benefit).

    - The school system included environmental literacy activities in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan for Title IV funding -- applicant should include documentation from the school district.

Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) description --
Explain how this proposal is part of implementing a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE), including how it achieves or supports each of the elements listed below. Provide enough detail to describe the degree of student engagement in each element (what students will do, and which grade levels are involved), how teachers/educators are involved (what teachers will do), and how the elements are supported by partners from science-based resources, environmental education partners, or the community. Include an explanation of

how this fits with the required curriculum and aligns with academic content standards. Be sure to include, for the outdoor experiences, where students will go and what they will do there (very important). ***This question is limited to no more than 3 pages.*** For more information visit: http://baybackpack.com/mwee/what-is-a-mwee.

- Issue Definition
- Outdoor Field Experience(s), issue investigation
- Synthesis and Conclusions
- Stewardship & Civic Action
- Supporting Practices: Active Teacher Support, Classroom Integration, Local Context, and Sustained Activity

Is Professional Development needed? --
Is teacher professional development needed in order to better prepare teachers to provide and facilitate a quality MWEE and field experience for students? If so, please explain (why it's needed, what teachers need to know, etc.), and include associated costs in the budget and justification. State the environmental education partners (or others) who are on board to provide this training. Describe what will take place, when, how long is the training, and what will the content include?

- Criteria: The program includes professional development for teachers as needed, with environmental education partners on board to provide it.

Section 3: BUDGET:
Use the template provided in the online application for download. The template provides space below the budget table to break out costs (for example, list field supplies and costs for each) and briefly explain any justification or clarification necessary, so there is a clear understanding of how you will use funds. Match is not required, but it may be included if you will be able to report and document it during the project.

Funding may be used to support school costs of participation (bus or other transportation allowed by school system policies, entrance fees to sites visited, substitute teachers, etc.) and costs for partners providing support such as teacher training and student educational activities. See "allowable expenses" on page 1 of this guidance.

Contact for Outcome 4: Jen Wolfe, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Explore and Restore Maryland Streams Program, jennifer.wolfe1@maryland.gov, 410-260-8988